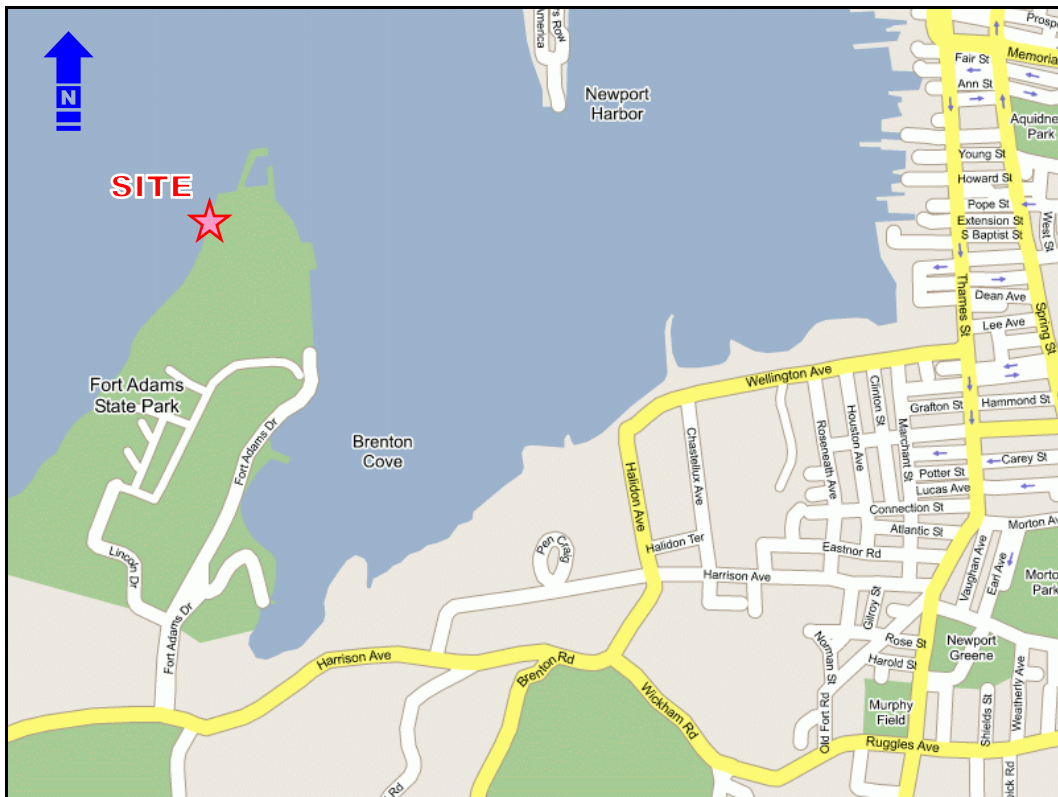


Site No. 14

FORT ADAMS - CHANNEL SIDE

Newport
Fort Adams State Park



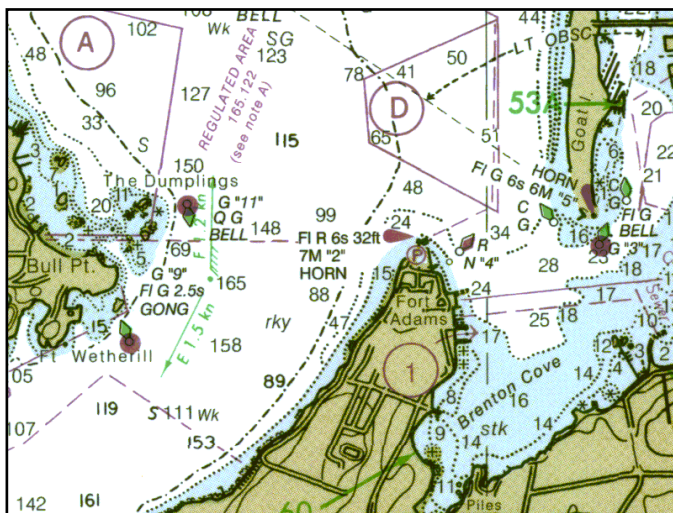
FORT ADAMS - CHANNEL SIDE

Site Description

Situated along the northerly shoreline of Newport Neck, Fort Adams State Park is the site of a former military installation dating back to the early 1800s. In addition to the well-maintained historic remains of Fort Adams, the vast grounds and shoreline of the park offer excellent views of Narragansett Bay and a number of recreational opportunities, including athletic fields, the Newport Museum of Yachting, dock and sailing facilities on the harbor side, and a visitors center. During the summer, the park is host to the world-renowned Newport Jazz and Folk Festivals as well as military reenactments and other special events. As with all Rhode Island State Parks, the park is open from sunrise to sunset with no charge for admission.

Location Assessment

Bay Location. Fort Adams is located at the point of a small peninsula along the northerly side of Newport Neck. Overlooking the East Passage channel to the west and Newport Harbor to the east, the strategic location of this point led to its development as a military reservation. Water uses in the area consist primarily of recreational boating and sailing (see Photos 2, 5, 7), and the high quality dock facilities on the harbor side provide landing for water taxis, ferries, and small cruise ships (Photos 1, 8). At the point proper, an L-shaped breakwater encloses a small harbor area for sailboats (Photos 2, 7). A cable area runs the across the channel to Jamestown (Photo 6), which is well marked by buoys and a large sign for vessels along the shoreline. While not heavily fished, angling within the site was observed to occur along the breakwater, the manmade harbor side shoreline, and the rip rap armored seawall along the channel side.



Though assessed as fully meeting aquatic life support criteria, waters in the vicinity of the site are permanently closed to shellfishing. This area of the bay has been designated a water quality goal of SA (high quality) by the RIDEM (see Appendix B). As reported in the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, common recreational catch within the lower East Passage is quite diverse: Striped Bass, Bluefish, Summer Flounder, Scup, Tautog, and Squid were all reported in significant numbers spring through fall.

Land Location. Fort Adams State Park is located along Newport Neck at the southwesterly end of Aquidneck Island. While this location is somewhat difficult to access by car at times (as it requires visitors to drive through Newport center), a RIPTA bus route provides seasonal service Memorial through Columbus Day) directly to Fort Adams State Park from the Gateway Visitors Center in downtown Newport. Surrounding land uses in the vicinity are predominantly low-density residential, including a small Navy housing complex located within the park itself (immediately south of the fort). Both active and passive recreational uses are supported within the state park by well-maintained athletic fields and ample open space. The park is also home

to the Newport Museum of Yachting, and guided tours of the historic fort are offered by the Fort Adams Trust during the summer months.

Environmental Constraints and Permitting. The coastal feature of the channel side (westerly) shoreline of Fort Adams State Park consists of a low profile stone seawall armored by heavy stone rip rap along its base (Photos 3, 4). Coastal waters along this shoreline are classified by the CRMC as Type 1 (Conservation Area) waters, in which the development of recreational fishing structures is prohibited. This stretch of shoreline is also documented to contain areas of eelgrass.

Facilities Assessment

Fort Adams State Park provides ample shoreline frontage for fishing, along the harbor and channel side shorelines as well as the L-shaped breakwater at the point. A paved path runs from the parking lot around the point and affords wheelchair accessibility to all of these areas. Of the above, the breakwater appears to offer the best opportunity for casting to the deeper waters of the East Passage (see aerial photo, nautical chart image). While the structure is not paved beyond its elbow (see Photo 5) nor does it currently offer any fishing-amenable features, the paved portion fronting the channel side is in good condition and functional for recreational fishing use (Photo 4).

Public use of Fort Adams State Park is supported by two large parking lots, an “upper” lot to the south (near the park entrance and soccer fields) and a “lower” lot to the north (closest to the fort, dock facilities, and visitors center - see Photo 1). The lower lot offers ample capacity (150+ vehicles) which together with the upper lot appears adequate for normal peak use (special events notwithstanding) of the park. Overnight parking passes can also be purchased at the on-site visitors center for \$3.00 per night.

Facilities within the park are both well-maintained and complementary to fishing use of the site. Ferry services run between the park and downtown Newport for a small fee, public restrooms are provided in the visitors center, and park grounds offer pleasant landscaping and benches throughout. The park was observed to be well used for walking, and both Fort Adams Park and Newport Neck are popular areas for bicycling as well.

Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<i>Existing Fishing Facilities</i>		X		
<i>Parking</i>			X	
<i>Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses</i>			X	
<i>Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit</i>		X		
<i>Site Aesthetics</i>				X
	Low	Medium	High	
<i>Water Quality (see Appendix B)</i>		X		

Priority for Capital Improvements: Medium

Fort Adams is generally acknowledged as one of the best public parks that the State has to offer, its vast grounds and quality infrastructure supporting a multitude of active and passive outdoor activities. Though providing ample shoreline frontage for recreational fishing, this quality of access could be improved upon through the development of dedicated fishing facilities offering better access to the deeper waters, improved safety, and other features conducive to an enjoyable fishing experience. While the channel side shoreline is furthest removed from harbor boating traffic and would not require a long structure to access deep waters, environmental constraints (eelgrass, Type 1 waters) would likely preclude the development of such a facility at this location.

Though the development of new fishing structure along this shoreline would be untenable, it may be possible to improve upon the existing shoreline facilities, particularly the breakwater at the point of the park. While further investigations would be required, it appears that this structure could conceivably be retrofitted to function as a small-capacity fishing facility (concrete deck overlay, built-in railings, improved handicap accessibility features, etc.) through prudent planning and design. The cost of this work (estimated to be moderate) would be much less than the development of a new pier structure, and more importantly disturbances to the sensitive shoreline environment in this area would be avoided. As Fort Adams State Park currently offers excellent support infrastructure for other land and water-based recreational uses, it is believed that the development of improved fishing facilities would be a welcome addition that would further enhance the public's enjoyment of the park.



Photo 1. Northerly “lower” lot of Fort Adams State Park. The visitors center is located at the far end of the lot.



Photo 2. Fort Adams Point and breakwater looking north. The Claiborne Pell (Newport) Bridge is visible in the background.



Photo 3. Channel side shoreline looking northeast.



Photo 4. Looking south along channel side from elbow in breakwater.



Photo 5. East Passage channel looking west from breakwater.



Photo 6. Manhole for (and buoys delineating) the cable line across the East Passage to Jamestown.



Photo 7. Looking south to Fort Adams from breakwater. The Museum of Yachting and the park offices/visitor center building are to the left of the fort.



Photo 8. Harbor side shoreline and dock facilities.